

ผู้ทรมองเข้มแข็งมากทั้งกายและใจ และบุคคลเช่นนั้นจะเป็นผู้ทำประโยชน์แก่สังคมมากที่สุด เพราะท่านได้ปลดปล่อยตนให้พ้นจากภาระและข้อผูกพันส่วนตัวได้หมดแล้วโดยสิ้นเชิง

ในตอนท้ายของหนังสือพุทธวิทยาเล่ม 2 นี้ ท่านผู้เขียนได้บรรยายภาคผนวกวิชา ปฏิภาณมูปาบทได้ด้วย โดยได้อภิปรายหัวข้อปฏิภาณมูปาบทต่าง ๆ ดังที่ข้าพเจ้าได้นำมาเขียน เป็นสูตร ๆ ไว้ในวารสารรัฐประศาสนศาสตร์ ปีที่ 2 เล่มที่ 1 นั้นแล้ว พร้อมกับพิสูจน์ ให้เห็นจริงว่า สูตรปฏิภาณมูปาบทนั้น ๆ มีความจริงอย่างไรอีกด้วย ถ้าท่านผู้อ่านได้ศึกษา ปฏิภาณมูปาบทตามแนวภาคผนวกในหนังสือเล่มนี้แล้ว จะเข้าใจได้ดีและเข้าใจได้ง่าย พร้อมกันนั้นก็จะเกิดความซาบซึ้งในพระพุทธศาสนา ซึ่งเป็นศาสนาที่กล่าวถึงปรัชญาชีวิต อย่างถูกต้องและละเอียดลออมาก ยิ่งกว่านั้นท่านยังจะได้เข้าใจชีวิตของตนอย่างแจ่มแจ้ง กระจ่างชัดแก่ทุกซอก และมึเทคนิคในการแก้ปัญหาชีวิตส่วนตัวและปัญหาสังคมอย่างดียิ่ง.

พระมหาวิจิตร คีรีสัทโท

LORDS OF LIFE

By H.R.H. Prince Chula Chakrabongse.

London, Alvin Redman, 1960, 352 pp.

This book, which has an excellent and discerning introduction by the historian, H.R. Trevor-Roper of Cambridge, has been described as the official, standard history of the Chakri dynasty and of Bangkok. The author, Prince Chula, is himself a member of the Chakri family and a grandson of King Chulalongkorn. He is a journalist by profession and a historian in his own right, having previously published several treatises in the fields of history and biography.

The author relies, throughout the work, mainly on Thai sources published and unpublished but he draws also upon English and French sources. The author's concern for accuracy and attention to detail are evident throughout. His intimate knowledge of the subject matter together with a clear and descriptive prose style combine to make this a highly readable and informative book.

The first chapter, entitled "Before" provides the historical perspective from the beginning of the history of the Thai race up to the fall of Ayudhia in 1767. The main body of the work follows, with a chapter on each of the Chakri kings during the period of absolute monarchy (1782 to 1932). The concluding chapter, "After" gives a sketchy account of Thailand in the period of constitutional monarch (1932-1959).

This book is of considerable interest to the student of public administration. As absolute monarchy, the Chakri kings were both rulers and administrators. As time went on the practice grew of selecting ministers from among the numerous princes of the dynasty. Chakri rule in Siam coincided with that period when most of the countries of Asia came under the colonial domination of the West. That Siam was able to maintain its independence and self rule during this critical period was due largely to the sagacious and prudent policies followed by the Chakri kings. This is often held up as their outstanding accomplishment.

It is also a matter of record that the royal incumbents of the period were devoted, responsible and for the most part, highly competent, administrators with many significant, if less known achievements to their credit. The revision of the Codes of Law under Rama I is one of these. Others may also be mentioned: the farming out of taxes, the discriminate use of foreign advisors, the practice of sending royal princes to Europe for their education.

A notable administrative accomplishment throughout this ruling family's history has been its identification with and support of the Buddhist faith. Evidences of this are the formidable task of rewriting the Tripitaka undertaken by Rama I; the successive efforts of kings to elevate monastic standards of learning and discipline; the large proportion of the royal revenues and artistic talent devoted to the construction of elaborate temples and viharas; the selection of the Buddhist priesthood as a vocation for succeeding generations of royal princes, some of whom were later to become kings. The reader is impressed at the same time with the tolerant policy towards, and even active support for, minority religious groups in the kingdom, a policy which the government has continued to the present day.

The overthrow of the absolute monarchy in 1932, which was followed by the voluntary abdication of King Prajadhipok, was a revolution only in the sense that there was a change in the location of political authority. Otherwise it resulted in no sudden break with the past. Members of the Royal Family have continued to play an active part in the governmental, social and intellectual life of the kingdom. Governmental activity since the period of absolute monarchy has greatly increased in scope. Top leadership has been subject to occasional and sudden changes through the device of the coup d'etat. Nevertheless the internal and external policies of the government have maintained a remarkable continuity with the past. The monarchy still provides moral leadership to the nation and it continues to hold a high place in the respect and veneration of the people.

Prince Chula's chronicle, while acknowledging the inevitability of constitutional monarchy in Siam, nevertheless creates an atmosphere of nostalgia for the days now past when the Chakri family were indisputably in control; when they provided not only the moral but the political, social and intellectual leadership of the people and when they could truly be called the "Lords of Life."

Cecil C. Brett
